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RELEASE PHYSICAL STRESS AND TENSION WITH MEDITATION

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Malorie Mackey is an actress, host, and writer living in Los Angeles, CA. Malorie's first book was published in 2017 and her short story "What Love Has Taught Me" has been published in the anthology "Choices." You can find Malorie's travel content on dozens of digital media platforms. Check out www.maloriesadventures.com for more. Malorie's adventures don't just encompass physical adventures. She has been a student of intuition since she was a teenager, studying at Edgar Cayce's A.R.E. In 2019, Malorie discovered the Monroe Institute while filming her travel show. Since then, she has been studying the art and science of consciousness through many different programs and life experiences.

It's a known fact that the stress and tension we deal with throughout our days tend to burrow into our bodies, generally much more than we'd anticipate. Long-term activation of our stress response system can lead to anxiety, depression, chronic headaches, muscle tension, heart disease, digestive problems, sleep problems, and memory problems according to experts. Unfortunately, I've found myself frequently dealing with this. I have an easy time holding on to stress in my body and a tough time letting it go. I tend to tense my muscles and assume a defensive posture as I go about my day rather than breathing things out and releasing them. So, I offer this post as a reminder that one of the many great benefits of meditation is that it can help you manage and release the physical stress and tension pain you may be holding on to. Here's how I've been working with meditation to release physical stress and pain.

I can't say this enough: one of the greatest things we can do for ourselves is to start the day with a quick gratitude meditation. There's a quick 15-minute guided meditation in Expand called "Welcome to Your Day" that's fantastic for this. I listen to this one, sometimes even before getting out of bed, focusing on my breath, inhaling all of the positive energy around me, and exhaling any tensions around issues that may not serve me anymore. After focusing on my breath, I'll call to mind anything and everything I am grateful for, allowing myself to truly feel that love, that gratitude for the things that matter to me. I'll see them, feel the joy, and live in that feeling for a while before rising to start my day. This begins the day on a wonderfully positive note that helps me keep the stress away.

There are times as I work from my desk when I begin to feel the buildup of pain and tension in my shoulders. I know as soon as I feel that tightness that it's time to step away and begin a breathing exercise to release the discomfort I'm holding on to. I move myself to a comfortable position, breathe in, and feel the breath moving into the spots holding the tension. With the exhale, I feel those spots lighten and release the tightness. I focus on mindfulness as I release tension in meditation. Feeling the areas of

pain or tightness loosen as I breathe out helps me to release it all for good, allowing me to feel better physically and mentally.

I also strongly recommend exercises to release that which no longer serves you. A couple of exercises in the Expand App—one being as short as five minutes—are perfect to allow you to bounce back and start your day with more fluidity. The more I practice these meditations to release any emotional dead weight, the lighter and less tense I feel in the long run.

All in all, regular meditation provides many benefits. One of the things I've appreciated most about my meditation recently is that it allows me to avoid the activation of my stress response which, in turn, allows for a happier state of mind, the ability to feel gratitude more fully, and the ability to release *and keep* tension out of my body. The more I meditate, the easier this gets, and it's been a regular focus for me as I go through some of life's challenges.

If you haven't explored **the Expand app** yet, I highly recommend it. The many wonderful guided and unguided options allow you to tailor your practice to create the best experience for yourself.